

changes the vertical positioning of the upper and lower conveyor assemblies 51 and 52 relative to each other.

In sharp contrast thereto, in the present invention, actuation of the coupling means 23 effects simultaneous adjustment of all the supports 14, 15, thereby to change the distance between the belts 3 and 5.

This latter arrangement has no counterpart in BENSON et al.; and moreover, there is no obvious way to proceed from BENSON et al. to the arrangement of the present invention.

Furthermore, the use of NARAMURA to teach further constructional details of the present invention, is improper, because NARAMURA is for an entirely different purpose. NARAMURA provides upper and lower heating plates, and adjusts the vertical distance between the upper and lower heating plates, for purposes having nothing to do with conveying as in the present invention. Instead, in NARAMURA, the upper and lower heating plates are moved toward each other to cause an upper surface of the food material to make contact with the bottom surface of the upper heating plate, thereby to heat the upper surface of the material to be cooked. This purpose has no conceivable counterpart in BENSON et al., in which the conveyors whose vertical distance is adjustable, serve no cooking purpose but only a conveying purpose. Accordingly, a person skilled in the conveyor art would not look to NARAMURA for any useful teaching, because NARAMURA is, as to the relative

vertical movement of parts, and as to the horizontal conveyance of material, found in an entirely different art.

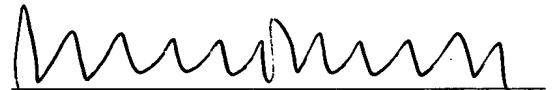
In view of the present amendment and the foregoing remarks, therefore, it is believed that this application has been placed in condition for allowance, and reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned **"Version with markings to show changes made."**

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG & THOMPSON

By



Robert J. Patch  
Attorney for Applicant  
Registration No. 17,355  
745 South 23rd Street  
Arlington, VA 22202  
Telephone: 521-2297

June 21, 2002

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 was amended as follows:

--1. (amended) Conveyor belt system (1) for transporting products through a bath of liquid[, such as heated cooking oil] in an oven (2), comprising a feed belt (3), accommodated in a base frame (4), and a top belt (5), located above the feed belt (3) and accommodated in an auxiliary frame (6), for transporting the products through the bath of liquid between the top belt (5) and the feed belt (3), as well an adjustable support mechanism (14, 15) for adjusting the distance between the feed belt (3) and top belt (5), which support mechanism (14, 15) comprises further adjustable supports (14, 15) by means of which the auxiliary frame (6) is supported on the base frame (4), [characterised] characterized in that all supports (14, 15) are mechanically coupled to one another by coupling means (23) [for common adjustment thereof], said coupling means being actuatable to effect simultaneous adjustment of all said supports (14, 15) thereby to change the distance between said belts (3, 5).--

Claim 6 was amended as follows:

--6. (amended) Conveyor belt system according to Claim 5, wherein there is a winder (24) close to the other transverse side of the frames, and the pull element is a

flexible cable (23) [or the like], the ends of which are each wound in the opposite direction on the winder (24).—

Claim 9 was amended as follows:

--9. (amended) Conveyor belt system according to Claim 8, wherein each ramp support (16) of the lead-in frame components (11) is fixed to, in each case, one of said lead-in frame components (11) by means of a bearer (28) which can be moved transversely with respect to said one lead-in frame component (11) and bears on the other lead-in frame component (8) and the associated block (18) is movably attached to that lead-in frame component (11) to which the bearer (28) is also attached.--

Claim 12 was amended as follows:

--12. (amended) Oven (2) according to Claim 11, wherein [the] a drive for the coupling means (23) is located outside the tank or cover.

Claim 13 was amended as follows:

--13. (twice amended) Oven (2) according to Claim 11, wherein a lifting device [(23)] (33) is provided for lifting the cover (35) and the conveyor belt system (1) relative to the tank (34).--